

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, December 7, 2004, 8:45 a.m., Legislative Hearing Room 1524, Nebraska State Capitol, 15th and K Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Members:	Jim Hewitt, Thomas Laging, V.J. Nelson, Patrick O'Donnell and Jeff Searcy present. Kim Todd and Karen Kilgarin absent.
Others:	Lynn Johnson (Parks and Recreation); Tom Casper (Capitol Administration); Dallas McGee (Urban Development); Kent Morgan, Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Dept.)

STATED PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Mr. Searcy called the meeting to order at 8:53 a.m.

Approval of meeting notes of October 28, 2004

The Commission members unanimously approved the meeting minutes of October 28, 2004.

Elements for 2004 annual report of Commission

Ed Zimmer stated that the ordinance of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission requires that the Commission meet at least four times per year; we have met four times in 2004. Although there have not been a lot of projects for review, there have been significant impacts including Lincoln Mall with the implementation of the rejuvenation plan. Centennial Mall has seen important advances throughout the year. Parks and Recreation has carried out the repair plan from R to P Streets. The Commission also approved the relocation of Tem and Ptah. We will also discuss Centennial Mall further as it relates to the Downtown Master Plan.

V.J. Nelson asked about the status of renaming Goodhue Boulevard. Mr. Zimmer stated that the project has been stalled and suggested that he attend the next Near South Neighborhood Association meeting to propose the idea to them.

Update on Downtown Master Plan/schedule for further consideration

Kent Morgan stated that he and Dallas McGee are here to update the Commission on the Downtown Master Plan and to get their thoughts on the proposed plan. This project is a joint effort between the City and Downtown Lincoln Association. Crandall Arambula of Portland, Oregon is the consultant for the project.

Mr. Morgan then reviewed the plan being proposed by the consultants. A convention center is being proposed in the rail yards. The post office would be relocated. They also proposed a streetcar route along P and Q Streets. A transfer center is proposed on 13th, 14th, or 15th Street.

They looked at a number of on-street and off-street bike systems. They are looking at 11th and 12th and M and N Streets as paired routes.

In terms of civic/cultural events, an arts corridor is being proposed. They are also proposing a festival garden. They are looking at a green corridor connecting Antelope Valley to the west.

The revitalization of retail space in downtown is a major element of the plan. The focus is on P Street, which they felt would function better under the current guide of retail.

As the consultants looked at Centennial Mall, they considered having full traffic along the Mall. It is currently pedestrian only traffic.

Mr. Morgan then briefly reviewed the proposal by Mr. Laging for Centennial Mall which was approved by the Commission in 2001. Mr. Laging commented that this is a very achievable project in the near-term.

Mr. McGee commented that many of these things mentioned are identified in the 2025 capacity diagram. One key concern is how to better address retail. Also, another issue is how to address housing. Many of these issues are inter-related. A focus is how to better relocate retail. There needs to be continuous retail with no gaps. Parking is also an issue for the retail user. The theater will bring in approximately 1 million people per year. There are many things on the table and our challenge is to determine the priorities, the costs and how they are all inter-related.

Mr. Laging stated that one of his concerns is the aspect of the market place being focused on retail. When the market place was evolved a few years ago, there were opportunities for the theater site and hotel site, for example. He feels that there must be continuous retail to be successful. He feels there are too many gaps along P Street to accomplish this over a period of time. He doesn't feel that the cinema is a retail anchor. It is more of an anchor for the entertainment district at night.

Mr. McGee commented that retail is difficult. The consultants spent a lot of time looking at retail. They feel the best area for retail is a 4 block stretch on P Street from 11th Street to Centennial Mall. There are gaps which are difficult to address, but those gaps exist in all the other places in downtown.

Mr. Searcy asked what the timeframe is. Mr. Morgan stated that January will be used to talk to different organizations and groups. The next community workshop will likely be in March. Mr. Searcy stated that perhaps there could be an update at the January meeting.

Mr. Searcy asked how important it is for the retail concept to open Centennial Mall up to traffic. Mr. Morgan stated that the consultants felt it was very important. They were fairly adamant that some type of vehicular access be provided at the north end of the Mall.

Mr. McGee stated that one of the reasons that Crandall Arambula was selected as the consultant is because they placed a heavy emphasis on implementation. They will be working on getting cost estimates for the various components of the project. One of their goals is that for every \$1 of public money that is allocated, there should be \$6 to \$7 of private investment.

Mr. Laging stated that he feels the Centennial Mall project cannot wait much longer. He feels it is a liability and a safety hazard. He feels it should be implemented in 5-6 years.

Mr. Zimmer asked if the Commission could meet earlier than the next regularly scheduled meeting on January 27. The Commission agreed to meet on January 20.

Staff report

There was no discussion under this agenda item.

Miscellaneous

No discussion took place under this agenda item.

Mr. Searcy adjourned the meeting at 9:57 a.m. and stated that they will reconvene in Room 1507 for the joint session with the Nebraska Capitol Commission.